Downton Abbey is a classic drama produced by ITV in the UK, which mainly depicts the social graph during George V’s period of 1912-1914. The drama, through which displays the question of the succession of the big family and also the stories between the British upper class and the servants in the lower class under strict hierarchy. The classy clothes, delicate food, elegant gestures and genteel words, and also the real aristocratic temperament fascinates me in various aspects. The followings will bolster my notion in three angles to analysis the drama comprehensively.

To start off, I want to focus on the family matters in the drama, which can be undoubtedly deemed as a crucial clue of the first season. The death of both heirs to the sinking of the Titanic destroyed the plans and gave rise to a distant male cousin, a lawyer from Manchester as an heir presumptive to the countess’s fortune. Therefore, when the whole family urged Mary to marry Mathew, Mary refused him for the simple reason that she regarded Mathew as a vulgar middle-class lawyer, not even a gentleman, ironically reflecting the obsession of hierarchy of the society then. In stark contrast, when a handsome foreign ambassador came to her sight, Mary couldn’t help herself and even had a sexual intercourse with him. Unfortunately, the abrupt death of the ambassador could dent Mary’s reputation if exposed to the public. Thus, it was high time for Mary to find a spouse and also for Edith and Sybil.

Moreover, besides the complex issues happened in the family, the relationship between Mathew and Mary can also be cited as a vital clue. The first time Mathew saw Mary, he was immediately attracted by Mary’s beauty and her elegant temperament as well. On the contrary, Mary didn’t feel the same. After the scandal occurred, she rebuilt the cognition toward Mathew, but she still hesitated when Mathew made a proposal. Actually, Mary’s actions had plenty of resemblance as Scarlett, who is beautiful, proud, snobbish and adept at playing with men’s affections. But she lost Mathew when she took it for granted that Mathew would love her like other men in the world. And when the war began, Mathew left and proposed with another woman, Lavenia. During the world-shaking war, every bond between man and man was to perish, including the one between Mary and Mathew.

Last but not least, as for the theme, the costume drama can provide a typical example to picture the era when the feudal system began to collapse and capitalism started to rise. There is no denying that we can still feel the spirit of freedom in the highly hierarchical system. Masters will ask their servants for advice when they need help, and the servants are free to express their own opinions. Although aristocrats lead a luxurious and exquisite life, they also bear the social responsibility that many lower-class people do not require to. It is completely different from most of the costume films owing to the fact that most people in the Downton Abbey cannot be easily judged. They did their duty as the people did in that era. With vivid personalities of the characters in the drama features, what we grasp is mostly a sacrifice to the feudal system, such as the pursuit of honor, dedication to work in the face of distress or elegant way. Under the cold system are sincere concerns of people, who abandoned the notion of grade to pursue free love with fearless, like Sybil.

In conclusion, the abbey has witnessed the huge change in the period with transition from feudalism to modern era, through which we can learn how to behave ourselves in the high-tech society with more advantageous conditions and advanced knowledge.